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Student guide to NEA assignments

Cambridge Advanced National in Cyber Security

Cambridge OCR Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification
Cambridge Advanced National in Cyber Security

Cambridge OCR Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification
Cambridge Advanced National in Cyber Security and Networks

Certificate | H037
Extended Certificate | HI37
For first teaching in 2026

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How do I complete the assignment?

- You should try to complete all tasks in the assignment.
- The assignment says what you need to do for each task. You must make sure you understand:
  - What the task is. This information is under the heading: **The task is:**
  - The evidence you must submit to your teacher for assessment to meet the tasks and assessment criteria. If evidence must be a specific type or format, this information is under the heading: **Your evidence must include**. If the assignment does not specify a format for your evidence, you can present it how you want to.
  - The **assessment criteria** for the task. These tell you what you need to do to meet the requirements of each Pass (P), Merit (M) or Distinction (D) assessment criterion. The assessment criteria are numbered, for example, P1, M1, D1.
  - The **assessment guidance**. This gives you more information about how to meet the assessment criteria. There might not be assessment guidance for each assessment criterion. It is only given where more information is needed.
- All work **must** be your own. You are not allowed help from anyone else. This includes:
  - Teachers, parents and other students.
  - Presenting information and material taken from other sources (for example, books/journals, media articles or the internet) as your own without proper referencing.
  - Meeting your centre's policy about using AI tools as a source of information. If you are not sure what the policy is, you should ask your teacher as it should comply with JCQ guidance. You should know about:
    - the appropriate and inappropriate use of AI
    - the risks of using AI
    - the possible consequences of using AI inappropriately in a qualification assessment.

  Your teacher will supervise you completing the assignment.
- If we think that you had extra help, the number of criteria you achieve may be changed or reduced to zero.
- The assignment tells you approximately how long it should take to complete all of the tasks.
- You are allowed to complete the assignment tasks over more than one session. (One session will probably be one normal lesson.) Your teacher must make sure that your work is stored securely between these sessions. You are not allowed to work on your assignment tasks between supervised sessions.

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How is the assignment assessed?

- Your teacher will assess your work after you hand it in. They cannot assess it in stages for you.
- Your teacher will use the assessment criteria and assessment guidance when they assess your work.
- The assessment criteria and assessment guidance for each task are in the assignment.
- Your teacher can explain these to you.
- There are assessment criteria for three grades: Pass, Merit and Distinction.
- Each grade has a number of assessment criteria.
- Your teacher will judge whether you have met each criterion or not.
- Your teacher will then add up the number of criteria achieved and give a total.
- Your final grade for the assignment depends on the total number of criteria you achieve.

What help can my teacher give me?

Your teacher can:	Your teacher cannot:
✓ Read the assignment to you. ✓ Help you understand what you need to do. For example, they can remind you: • of the definitions in the command words list. This could be reminding you of the definitions for **Explain** and **Analyse**. • to look at your own notes from lessons that covered aspects that you may not be sure about (e.g. to think about a lesson you completed on planning and how this may apply to your assignment tasks.) ✓ Tell you how long you have to complete the tasks. ✓ Explain the assessment criteria. ✓ Explain the assessment guidance. ✓ Remind you about what you have been taught. ✓ Give you some general help if you get stuck.	× Tell you what to do or how to complete the tasks to meet the criteria. × Give you solutions or answers. × Say how to improve your work. × Assess your work in sections and give feedback.

What if I get stuck?

You can:

- Ask the teacher to explain the task again.
- Move on to another part of the assignment.
- Come back again later to have another go.

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What is plagiarism and referencing?

- Plagiarism is when you use or copy someone else's work or ideas, but do not say you have done so.
- Plagiarism is very serious.
- If you plagiarise, you may be awarded 0 criteria for this unit, or fail the whole qualification.
- You must always say when you use someone else's work or ideas – this is called referencing.
- Examples of when you need to reference are:
  - Using ideas from a book
  - Using research from the internet (including Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools)
  - Copying something someone says – like a quote.
- You should think about why you want to use and reference other people's work or outputs from AI tools. You can only be rewarded for what you know, understand or can do yourself. This cannot be shown by copying the words and ideas of others or using outputs from AI tools. You should also be aware that:
  - AI tools may produce answers that contain incorrect information, biased information or fake references to books/articles by real or fake people.
  - Some AI chatbots have been identified as providing dangerous or harmful answers to questions.
- Make sure it's clear in your work how you are using the material you have referenced to inform your thoughts, ideas or conclusions.
- When you hand in your work, you will be asked to sign a form.
- This form says that all the work you have done is your own, and that you have referenced all the resources you have used.
- You can find more information about how to reference in the OCR Guide to Referencing.

Using online resources/the internet

You must:	You must not:
✓ Develop ideas into your own words and outputs. ✓ Reference any websites/sources you use.	× Simply copy and paste ideas or provide AI generated outputs as your evidence. × Discuss live tasks online in places such as chat rooms. × Post your work to any online channels.

Can I work in a group?

- Only when your teacher tells you that you can.
- All the work you produce **must** be your own.
- You cannot be rewarded for work that somebody else in a group has done.

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Does my work for each task need to be in a certain format?

- For each task we'll tell you if your work must be in a specific format. Check the wording in each task carefully. This information will be given under the heading: **Your evidence must include:**
    - For example: 'Your evidence must include a risk assessment' or 'Your evidence must include access control policies'.
- If the assignment does not specify the format for the evidence, you can present your work in different ways – it can be handwritten, word-processed, on video or in digital media. What you choose should be appropriate to the task(s).
- Templates are provided in the assignments for some tasks to help you present your work. The tasks will tell you when to use a template and which template to use.
- You must make sure that your centre number, candidate number and the unit number are on each page. This should appear as a header or footer. If you produce video evidence, these details must be clear in the file name or evidence itself.
- If you are unsure about what evidence you need, please ask your teacher.

Can I ask my teacher for feedback on my work?

- We have given your teacher instructions on what kind of feedback they can give you.
- They are allowed to tell you what task could be improved but not how to improve it.
- You can use that feedback to try and improve your work yourself.
- Your teacher can say what they've noticed about your work. For example, they can tell you that you have explained something that the assessment criterion asks you to analyse. In this example, they could share the difference between an explanation and an analysis, using the generic command words definitions. It's then up to you to decide if you need to change it and how to change it.

What do I do when I have finished?

- Make sure that you have saved all your work.
- All digital files should have sensible names.
- Make sure your work does not contain any personal information of real people (for example, name, address or date of birth). This must be blanked out (anonymized). Your teacher will tell you how to do this.
- Make sure that your name, candidate number, centre number and page numbers are on your work.
- Provide the work that you've completed for each task to your teacher. They might ask to see your draft work and early versions, so please keep this in a safe place.

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How to reference and avoid plagiarism

What is referencing?

Giving details in your work about where your information came from.

What is plagiarism?

Taking someone else's work, words or ideas and passing them off as your own.

Do

- ✓ **Reference** anything you've copied from websites, books or course notes.
- ✓ Always use quotation marks “ ”.
- ✓ Say where it's from and the date you got it.
- ✓ **Use your own words** as well when asked to describe or explain something.

Why?

- ✓ A good way to get across your own opinions and thoughts.
- ✓ Demonstrating your understanding helps get you marks.

Don't

- × **Just** copy from websites, books or course notes – use it to support your own thoughts and ideas and make sure you **reference**.

Consequences

- × Copying without referencing looks like you're pretending it's your own words. This is known as plagiarism and **you could lose marks**.

If you're not sure what this means for your assignment work, ask your teacher.

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